DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 173 474 UD 019 531

TITLE	School Security: Guidelines for Maintaining Safety in School Desegregation.
INSTITUTION	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. Community Relations Service.
PUB DATE	79
NOTE	23p.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrative Organization; Administrator Role; Prevention; School Community Relationship; School Environment; *School Integration; School Safety; *School Security; School Vandalism; *Security Personnel; *Student Needs

ABSTRACT

A well organized school security program is one solution to controlling the increase in school disruption. However, a long-range security program requires more than enforcing regulations. The role of school security is to influence the development of an educational climate where the classroom atmosphere is peaceful. The responsibilities of security officers should emphasize the importance of preventive security measures. For this purpose, a teamwork approach is necessary. Also, security officers should strengthen ties with students, administrators, school staff, and the community. In dealing with students, school security officers have to understand the students' point of view. In order for security measures to be effective, the security force and the administration need to agree on job descriptions and policy goals for the security program. Parents and community representatives must be convinced of the need for school security. In addition to daily actions for school security, a contingency plan for disruption is needed. This plan should include provisions for building safety and security; personal safety and security; administrative control of operations; emergency communications systems; and police involvement. (Author/MC)

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JUN 8 1979

U.S. Department of Justice

ED173474

SCHOOL SECURITY:

GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING SAFETY IN SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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UD019531

This brochure is dedicated to the memory of Harry J. Mote, Director of the Security Department of the San Diego City Schools. He devoted his life to school security.

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PREFACE

In recent years, as the nation's schools have been desegregating, problems of violence, vandalism, and disruption in the schools have become more and more severe. Public officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students alike are concerned over the number of serious incidents occurring and the climate of fear that is resulting. A study of the problem, made at a conference in Houston, Texas, in November, 1977, is reported in this brochure.

A well-organized school security program is one possible solution to school disruption. But because of the great public outcry over this issue, most existing programs place emphasis only on containing school violence. Relatively few stress preventive approaches, or approaches that involve forms of control other than physical security. This report suggests some ways to make the security officer more than just a police officer, because a long-range security program requires more sensitivity than is involved in a simple program of enforcing regulations. During periods of racial tension, for example, even students who are normally calm and orderly may get into difficulties.

One step in developing a security program that addresses such problems is to identify the root causes of student frustration and anger, which lead to classroom tension. Accomplishing this mission will require the resources of many groups—administrators, counselors, police, community leaders, as well as teachers, parents, and students themselves. But school security, too, can play a central role. This brochure describes ways that school security can go beyond short-term containment measures. It is assumed that such measures—screening against trespassers, monitoring class changes, patrolling remote areas of the school building—have already been taken. Therefore, the suggestions given here focus more on attitudes and guidelines than on specific physical measures. As a result, effective training for a school security staff as described in this brochure would include not only enforcement skills, but also human relations and communications skills and knowledge of student rights.

The first section of the brochure analyzes the role of the school security staff. The following section suggests ways to build a system of trust, respect, and cooperation between the security staff and other segments of the school population. The final section outlines perhaps the most important element of any security operation—the contingency plan.

HOW TO USE THIS BROCHURE

This brochure analyzes how school security officers can influence the development of an environment that is conducive to learning. A well-structured school security training program that applies this material properly can help the individual officer to be more responsive to what is happening in the school, and can help school administrators to be more responsive to security needs as they recognize the contribution that security efforts can make to the learning environment.

The individual school district should use this brochure in conducting an initial security needs assessment. Each section suggests skills and activities which the school district may identify as necessary or useful. But because security operations differ in size and structure, the assignment of responsibilities for specific activities is left to the school district's discretion. Obviously, a six-person operation could not match the effort of a 200-person operation facing similar difficulties.

Once the needs assessment is completed, a formal training program, based on the most urgent needs, should be investigated. The resource list at the back of this brochure may be helpful to the security director or school administrator who wishes to follow through in the design of such training.

INTRODUCTION

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL SECURITY: UNDEFINABLE?

School security officials ought to have a clear, undisputed, and operational definition of their role. Protecting life and property is one part of it. So is assisting the school administrator and principal in restoring order when trouble strikes. Developing comprehensive safety plans for emergencies like fires, floods, and other natural disasters may be another part. But such obvious roles do not encompass the total definition of school security. Neither does the deterrence of school crime, the identification of troublemakers, nor the design of the burglar-proof school building.

Instead, the role of school security is more accurately found in influencing the development of an educational climate where the classroom atmosphere is peaceful, but not so restricted that intellectual freedom is constrained. This definition suggests that there is an intricate tie between the security program and the educational process. A peaceful atmosphere does not merely enable the process of education to continue, it contributes to the vigor of that process.

The security staff is thus responsible for more than routine defense or containment. Today's security officers should no longer think of themselves as simply law or policy enforcers, or guards of civil conduct. Their increased responsibilities should specifically emphasize the importance of preventive security measures, for careful planning here could encourage discussion and action on critical school issues which otherwise might provoke student unrest.

To effectively carry out this complex role, security officers must develop and maintain good working relationships with all key groups in the school. Teamwork will promote a peaceful yet intellectually challenging learning climate.

Security Teamwork

Adopting a fragmented approach is a grave mistake of many school security programs. Officers who attempt to maintain school security single-handedly are forced continually into a fire-fighting posture with little chance for identifying the causal spark before the blaze is out of control.

A teamwork approach, on the other hand, allows the security officers more opportunity to isolate potentially explosive concerns before they reach a crisis level.

Security officers play general, coordinative roles in relation to various team members: students, administrators, school staff, and the community. The security force that strengthens its ties with each of these groups makes its own job easier, first because contact with the groups can help prevent trouble from erupting, and second because, if trouble does occur, a good relationship with these groups helps make a response to complaints more effective. Following are examples of ways security officers can work with the several groups.

PART I: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL SECURITY OFFICERS

THE SECURITY OFFICERS' ROLE WITH STUDENTS

Security officers deal with students in situations such as helping teachers control unruly students in the classroom, but this direct role need not be the only way that the security force monitors student behavior. Security officers who are responsive to student activities and opinions may be able to check problems at their most fundamental level. An alert security officer can head off possible confrontations by recognizing undue gatherings or unusual activities that could multiply into widespread student dissatisfaction. In addition, where the mechanisms exist for such interaction, the security officer could help the school principal carry out recommendations to solicit student opinions of security operations, allow student leaders to voice their concerns and suggestions in a constructive way, involve a cross-section of all students in committees for tailoring a school security plan, or promote a formal means of communication between students and other school elements to lessen the fears one group may have of the other.

THE SECURITY OFFICERS' ROLE WITH THE ADMINISTRATION

For administrators, the school security staff serves as a resource to suggest ways to avoid problems. Officers should urge administrators to review periodically all school policies and procedures, especially those that impact directly on student or staff morale. For example, administrators should check attendance rates, disciplinary actions, and similar matters, as they affect safety on school grounds, and they might work with student, school staff, or community volunteers to examine critical school issues. With the support of the administration, the security force can involve school staff and the community in security planning.

The security force should discuss its legal liability to assure that false impressions regarding its authority are not reflected in administrative procedures.

The activities described above give a general indication of the role the security force can play in allaying dissension before it becomes disruptive. Below are some specific examples of the way security officers can work closely with students, administrators, school staff, and the community to become aware of their attitudes.

PART II: ACTIVITIES OF SCHOOL SECURITY OFFICERS

COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS

In dealing with students, the school security officer's primary hurdle is likely to be in understanding a situation from the students' point of view. Some key steps to take are:

- don't label individual students as "troublemakers"
- remember that not all student leaders are elected to school offices; there are other forms of popularity
- help safety-minded students express their fears without being thought of as informers
- recognize the importance to students of some events such as athletic competitions, school rallies and dances, and local and national celebrations
- find out if any student groups have implicitly established rights to certain territories
- pay attention to any cliques in the school; they may be bound together by frustration or anger
- note if certain school customs, such as songs, symbols, flags, or names, might be racially or ethnically coded
- remember that students are more likely to live by codes they helped design than by rules that the system developed and imposed
- recognize that power based on personal interaction and trust is firmer than power based on appointed authority

The attempt to understand the students' point of view is just one step toward making the process of desegregation calm; security officers must also equip themselves with general information which will help them understand and deal with conflict. For example, they should (1) be knowledgeable about the makeup of the student body and school staff, (2) be aware of the school's social atmosphere, particularly by taking a look at past racial, ethnic, or cultural incidents and the polarization of students that may have resulted, (3) recognize any patterns of suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary actions, and (4) check to see if participation in curricular and extracurricular activities occurs along racial or ethnic lines.

Such knowledge can enable the security staff, as well as teachers, other school staff, and administrators to acknowledge student dissatisfaction with policies and procedures, rather than regard

student complaints as simply juvenile ridicule. Once this point is established, officers can follow up in various ways, perhaps by suggesting the use of student volunteers to review security procedures or to serve on a school security advisory council. Another fruitful activity might be to arrange with student clubs to make a security presentation and to hear the students' points of view on security operations; or officers could suggest the use of general assemblies and teacher/student speak-out sessions as mechanisms for gauging the effect of student emotions and viewpoints on school issues. Some communities have established tri-ethnic committees, which might be open to a security presentation.

In all dealings with students, security officers should explain that the goal of school security is maintaining an educational climate rather than serving as a student control measure.

WORKING WITH ADMINISTRATORS

In order for security measures to be effective, the security force and the administration need to agree on key points. For example:

- security should aim to accomplish more than just short-term containment
- security's advice could be used not only to control a major disruption, but also to create a safer educational climate
- the security director should be the focal point of all security interests; this will happen only when appropriate recognition is given to the security operation
- well-managed conflict is not harmful and may reveal critical problems requiring internal review and analysis
- safety is an educator's responsibility too since incidents often arise from dissatisfaction or frustration over school policies
- top administrators must not confuse movement with improvement; that is, an active security program can't be taken for granted. Constant review and evaluation are necessary
- although security's authority is granted by the top administrator, the board of education is ultimately responsible for setting the tone of the whole school system

To establish the foundation of administrative support, security officers should equip themselves with basic information, as suggested earlier, such as knowledge of the makeup of the student body and the teaching staff. The security staff should then urge that the administration draw up clear policy goals for the security program and develop a realistic job description for the security director based on these goals.

The security officer whose job is clearly defined and supported by administrators can make recommendations that would need to be acted on at the administrative level. In addition, the backing of the administration might help the security staff to gather facts and develop resources, such as a list of other school systems which may be contacted regarding models of alternative security methods, student discipline codes, student participation in review committees, and so forth. Along the same lines, officers could contact teachers' unions, Federal and State agencies, and private concerns to compile a resource list for use by the school in times of crisis. Another tool is a compilation of various alternative approaches to suspension or expulsion, especially those non-punitive approaches which have education as their ultimate goal.

STRENGTHENING TIES WITH THE PARENT/COMMUNITY GROUP

Parents and concerned community representatives must be convinced of the need for school security. In addresses to the PTA and other parent or community groups, the security officer can encourage support of security measures, as well as learn of the community's security concerns, so these may be conveyed to school administrators and staff. Here are some key ideas that should be encouraged in the community:

- the response to school problems requires a teamwork approach, a coordinated effort involving parent and community groups
- community issues and conflict are sometimes mirrored in school disruption, so that solutions to school difficulties may lie within the resolution of a community issue
- since accountability is a two-way process, the community should attempt to identify possible actions that could provoke classroom tension

- in addition to those activities which have become commonplace (parents' night, PTA), parents should participate in other activities such as citizen coalitions that could assist during transitional periods in the schools

The security force can further seek support and cooperation by addressing community meetings to spell out security's interests. Conversely, community representatives from a broad base of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds should be brought into the school's security advisory council. The security staff should also be receptive to the assistance of community professionals who are willing to volunteer to help resolve school problems. Principals and administrators should include community representatives in planning, designing, and reviewing curricular and extracurricular school activities.

PART III: THE CONTINGENCY PLAN

THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW OF CRISIS RESPONSE

Regardless of the amount of trust and respect the school security officer gains with students, administrators, the school staff, or community groups, disruption may occur. A contingency plan should be developed for that eventuality.

The contingency plan is basically a document outlining who has the responsibility for carrying out a specific task at a certain time, in a certain place, and by a certain method. In other words, it answers the who, what, when, where, and how of responding to serious school disruption.

Restoring order is the key task to be accomplished in such a plan. It is not, however, the plan's true purpose.

A classroom setting which resembles an armed military fortress ready for battle might provide for the students' personal safety, though it hardly is conducive to a challenging educational climate. The establishment of this climate is the ultimate purpose and goal of a contingency operation.

The following pages outline a minimum number of steps school security directors and other officials should take in developing their own tailored version of a contingency plan. School systems are encouraged to use this outline only as a starting point. Assistance in assessing school problems, designing a security program, or formulating a contingency plan may be obtained by contacting resources listed in the final section of this brochure.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SECURITY DIRECTORS SHOULD

A. Plan for Building Safety and Security By

- assuring that fire alarm systems are secure and that a delayed signal system or a similar safety mechanism is designed in concert with the fire department
- monitoring the flow of traffic onto school grounds
- securing outside doors from trespassers, but allowing use of the doors from the inside in the event of a fire or other emergency

- instituting a sign-in, sign-out system along with color-coded identification tags to be worn by all visitors to help exclude unauthorized persons from school premises

- designing a signal for announcing the existence of an emergency situation, and the need for the contingency plan to become effective

- assuring that clear instructions are given to staff not having a class in session at the time a signal is given (report to command post for deployment, etc.)

- developing special procedures for cafeteria and shop staff, particularly emphasizing the lock-up of knives, tools, and other utensils that could be used as weapons

- making sure that trash rooms and trash containers, as well as other highly combustible areas and materials, are secured

- assigning personnel to areas likely to be gathering points for groups of students—rest rooms, cafeteria, gyms, auditoriums, etc.

- developing clear and concise reporting procedures for school damage and vandalism and other incidents requiring security staff to respond

B. Plan for Personal Safety and Security By

- setting up an adequate first aid facility and procedures for handling injuries

- isolating the disruption as much as possible by separating opposing groups, giving each separate meeting places, and working independently with each

- curtailing movement in the school by postponing class change and eliminating bells until threat of escalation ceases

- assuring that operational instructions are given to teachers in class at the time a contingency plan is put in operation (lock doors, close windows, shut down power equipment, keep

pupils in classroom, announce that teachers have been trained for this event, and request that students follow instructions for their own personal safety and welfare)

- having available a compilation of appropriate legal sanctions which can be used as tools for control and for crowd dispersal

- insisting that all staff avoid physical involvement except for self-protection or protection of students

- providing clear guidelines of personal demeanor in times of crisis (controlling emotional involvement, avoiding argument over who's to blame, promoting fairness)

- developing clear and precise procedures for dismissal of school (dismissal by floors, use of PA system to control movement, etc.)

- developing clear and accurate reporting procedures for all personal injuries

C. Plan for Smooth Administrative Control of Operations By

- generally assuring that schools will be closed only if necessary and according to predetermined criteria of the level of conflict (Levels are explained in the Police Involvement section later)

- arranging and designing a central comn and post outside the main administrative office (The post must have a communications system with links to the principal's office and the police department)

- establishing a clear chain of command for all persons having specific responsibilities during the crisis

- identifying a staff stenographer to record all incoming messages and notes pertaining to activities

- developing an equipment checklist and a list of emergency phone numbers for the command post

- having a motor pool available (perhaps through driver training instructors) to transport the injured to the hospital or students and staff to their homes

- notifying all buses to be on alert for the transportation of students

- having available alternative planned bus routes should normal routes be obstructed

- setting aside a specific room for holding disruptive students, counseling them, and dealing with them according to established codes of discipline

- differentiating between actions subject to arrest and actions subject to school discipline

- setting aside a specific room for parents who traveled to the school for information

D. Plan for Effective Emergency Communication Systems By

- establishing a rumor control and information center at a central location to handle parent transportation concerns, school schedule information, community inquiries, etc.

- selecting someone to operate the school's intercom/bell system, and to relay messages only when authorized to do so

- establishing a backup messenger communication system in the event that the normal communication system fails to operate or is inadequate

- instructing all staff in the handling of outside communications to the school

- identifying a system for establishing swift parental contact when necessary

- providing for a two-way communication system on all buses and pool cars

- designing a public information/media relations operation through which all information to the media is channeled (strict media policies should be specifically designed for crisis situations)

E. Take a Number of Steps to Assure Smooth Police Involvement in a School Crisis, Should the Need Ever Arise, By

- developing with police officials a written memorandum of agreement regarding coordination of response to school disruption
- designing an ongoing communication process to allow for the continual review of activities and plans
- investigating the possibility of a police-assigned School Resource Liaison Officer
- drawing up a special emergency plan relating just to major disorders, such as bombings
- designating only one or two individuals in the school having authority to call the police
- arranging for a "call back" number to verify the police assistance call as legitimate
- understanding that the school administrator will determine the seriousness of the school's problem with assistance from the security staff and the police
- mandating that the principal or an authorized designee always remains in charge of school premises and personnel
- recognizing that the police, if called to assist in calming a school disturbance, have primary responsibility for enforcing the law and will insist on making the final decision on all matters involving their sworn obligations; and
- realizing that there is no better way to test a contingency operation than through conducting a dry run

F. Plan for Phase Out of the Contingency Plan By

- remembering that a military-like response often necessary to control a violent situation may keep the peace, but will not contribute to the harmonious educational climate of the school

- understanding that the decision to phase out a contingency plan must assure both the safety of the students and staff and the re-establishment of the desired educational climate

- considering ways to handle possible pressures—both internal and external—to keep the plan in force

- having an established and understandable signal terminating the emergency state

- developing final reporting procedures for all persons involved

A FINAL WORD ON SMOOTH POLICE INVOLVEMENT

A natural inclination for anyone facing problems of school disruption is to immediately contact the local police. But in doing so, a school official may add to the problem by prematurely requesting the intervention of uniformed and armed officers.

Before requesting direct police intervention, the school system should make every effort to settle disruption through suggestions listed in this brochure. The police department, however, should be apprised of the school difficulty in case their services are later needed. *School and police officials should respond to disruption according to its level of intensity. Generally, there are three levels:*

Level 1—When disruption is confined to one area and there is no threat to students or staff.

School officials take the necessary action here. Avoid the implications that could arise with the massive use of outside resources. The overall policy should be containment and removal by the school security force, with minimum interruption of educational processes.

Level 2—When disruptive forces are mobile or pose a direct threat to members of the school community.

As in Level 1, schools should remain open. The security force should isolate the disruptive activity, hold or apprehend those

involved, and end the threat of escalation. If necessary, supplementary school professionals should be used to help manage school administration during the difficulties. The school's security advisory council should also be summoned.

Level 3—When disruption is general, educational processes have ended for most students, and there are serious threats to students or staff. In short, the situation is out of control.

Police assistance should be requested according to guidelines previously established in a written memorandum of understanding with the police department. Generally, the school should be closed. Insofar as legal violations must be suppressed, authority to end disruption should shift from the school administrator to the police officer in charge. However, responsibility for the school should remain in the hands of the school administrator.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Austin, Texas, Independent School District
Baltimore Public Schools
Brentwood, New York, Public Schools
Bridgeport, Connecticut, Public Schools
Brown Education Center, Louisville, Kentucky
Boston, Massachusetts, Pupil, Personnel and Safety Department
Buffalo, New York, Board of Education
Cincinnati Public Schools
Cleveland School District, Greater Cleveland Project
Cleveland Public Schools
Columbus, Ohio, Public Schools
Community Relations Service, U.S. Justice Department
Danbury, Connecticut, Public Schools
Dayton, Ohio, Police Department
Fort Bend, Texas, Independent School District
Gary Job Corps Center, San Marcos, Texas
Houston Independent School District, School Security Department
Houston Independent School District, Student Representatives
Houston Teachers' Association, NEA
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
Los Angeles Unified School District
Louisville, Kentucky, Public Schools, School Security Department
Medford, Massachusetts, Public Schools
Memphis City Schools
Montebello, California, Unified School District
National Education Association
National Institute of Education
National School Boards Association
New Orleans Public Schools
New York City Board of Education
North Forest Independent School District, Houston, Texas
Peralta Community College District, Oakland, California
Phoenix Public Schools, School Security Department
Portland, Oregon, Public Schools
Jay Rich Associates, Washington, D.C.
R. J. Rubel and Associates, Silver Spring, Maryland
Safe Schools Project, Olympia, Washington
San Antonio Independent School District
San Diego Police Department
Seattle, Washington, Public Schools
Topeka Unified School District
Tucson Public Schools
Urban League, Portland, Oregon
U.S. Office of Education
Washington, D.C., Public Schools, Safety and Security Office
Washington, D.C., Teachers Union, Local 6, AFT-AFL-CIO
Washoe County School District, Reno, Nevada

RESOURCES

American Association of School Administrators
1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209

American Federation of Teachers
11 Dupont Circle, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Community Relations Service
U.S. Justice Department
Washington, D.C. 20530
Regional offices, as listed below:

NEW ENGLAND
Room 1920
100 Summer Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

NORTHEAST
Room 3402
26 Federal Plaza
New York, New York 10007

MID-ATLANTIC
Room 309
2nd & Chestnut Streets
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

SOUTHEAST
Room 900
75 Piedmont Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

MIDWEST
Room 1113
175 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60603

SOUTHWEST
Room 13B-35
1100 Commerce Street
Dallas, Texas 75242

CENTRAL
Room 2411
911 Walnut Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
4th Floor
1531 Stout Street
Denver, Colorado 80202

WESTERN
Room 703
100 Mission Street
San Francisco, California 94105

NORTHWEST
Room 1898
915 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98174

The Council of the Great City Schools
1707 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

International Association of Education Security Personnel
P.O. Box 2752
Los Angeles, California 90051

Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
U.S. Justice Department
633 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

League of Women Voters
Human Resources Department
1730 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(national office can refer you to appropriate state and local leagues)

National Association of School Security Directors
2538 South Ervay Street
Dallas, Texas 75215

National Conference of Christians and Jews, Inc.
43 West 57th Street
New York, New York 10019

National Education Association
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Educational Resources Information Center
National Institute of Education
1200 Nineteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20208

National School Boards Association
1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

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